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ABSTRACT

This student guide for a program focusing on the relationship or bond between parent and child discusses how this bond forms, how it affects the development of the child, why children find it hard to separate from their parents and how they deal with the separation fears, and provides some practical suggestions for making inevitable separations less upsetting for the child. Designed around a magazine format to allow maximum flexibility to different groups using the materials, the guide is divided into seven sections: (1) an overview of the theme and contents; (2) a summary of the major learnings of the theme; (3) feature articles containing the major content and including practical suggestions for parents; (4) a film review section which includes a synopsis of the accompanying film program and a related discussion question; (5) three activities aimed at both individual and group participation; (6) a selection of field activities, discussion questions, and research topics designed to reinforce the ideas presented in the articles and meet the needs of a wide variety of classroom groups; and (7) a bibliography for further reading on the theme. (Author/JEG)

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ATTACHMENT AND INDEPENDENCE:

YOU CAN'T HAVE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER

ED169933

Love Me and Leave Me

Student Guide

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footsteps

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A world to be born under your footsteps...
St.-John Perse

FROM THE EDITORS

The closer we are to someone the more easily we can separate and become independent from them. This thought sounds contradictory at first. But look at it another way. When a relationship becomes very strong, both people feel more secure. There is less worry and few demands to prove one's love. This security enables both people to separate without fear of being abandoned. It enables them to seek friendships with other people. This booklet focuses on the relationship or bond between parent and child. You'll learn how this bond forms and how it affects the development of the child. You'll read why children find it hard to separate from their parents and learn about ways they deal with their separation fears. Last, you'll learn about practical suggestions for making separations between parent and child easier.

CONTENTS

The Big Ideas 2
Attachments: Becoming Close 3
Separations: Letting Go 6
Film Review Section 9
Activity Pages 10
Grab Bag 13
Book Browsing 14

THE BIG IDEAS

Babies form a special attachment or bond with the people who respond to their calls for food, comfort and attention in a consistent and loving way.

A strong attachment to the parent gives the child the security to become independent and reach out to other people.

There are things parents can do to make inevitable separations less upsetting to their children.

True or False?

	T	F
A baby who is very attached to either or both parents is likely to become overly dependent on them.	☐	☐
Spoiling results when parents pick up a baby frequently.	☐	☐
By ignoring a baby's cries, parents are "building character" and getting their child ready for independence.	☐	☐
If parents respond to a baby's demands for food, comfort and attention, the baby becomes even more demanding.	☐	☐

ATTACHMENT: Becoming Close

There was a time when many parents thought that picking babies up, cuddling and talking to them was a bad habit. They worried that such attention would spoil children forever. In 1928, John B. Watson, an American psychologist, warned parents:

> *Never hug or kiss them* [your children], *never let them sit in your lap. If you must, kiss them once on the forehead when they say goodnight.*

He and others persuaded parents that children would never become considerate, independent adults if they were emotionally attached to their parents. Because of this, some people still have reservations about picking up a baby.

We know now, however, that it's essential for parents to be responsive to their babies. When parents respond quickly and consistently to cries during the first months, babies cry less often and for a shorter time later on.

In other words, once babies feel sure of their parents, they become less demanding.

In general, the more love parents give a baby, the more lovable that child will become — and the easier it will be for that child to make friends with other people. A strong attachment to the parent gives the child the security and confidence to let the parent go later on:

> The secure child becomes independent and reaches out to others.

Let's look at how this happens.

A BOND IS BORN

The world is quite a shock to newborn babies.

Perhaps for the first time, they feel uncomfortable — wet, hungry and unprotected. For the first time, they have to wait — and they're miserable and anxious until the minute they are fed. They can't anticipate or see cause and effect; seeing their mother doesn't mean that it's almost time to eat. Newborn babies don't have any image of their parents in mind.

Not yet.

But, without knowing it, babies begin to build a special bond with their parents. They cry. They startle. They stretch and wiggle. Their hands and feet speak as well as their faces. When babies act in these ways, parents want to respond.

Gradually, parents become able to "read" and respond to their babies' needs. They learn what those squirms and stretches mean. They learn to interpret different cries — the "I am hungry" from the "I want to be held" cry. They discover just how their babies like to be held, talked to and stroked.

At the same time, babies learn to recognize their parents' special touch, smell and voices. They begin to associate their parents with feeling comfortable and secure. When they cry, they can rely on their parents to come and try to help. Parents may not be able to relieve all discomfort, but what counts is that they are there *trying*.

Gradually babies begin to love and trust their parents. This special bond is called **Attachment.**

Studies have shown that there is a **Critical Period** during which babies must make that first important attachment to their parents or some other adult who gives them special care. If babies are to develop normally, they need to form this bond to the adult within a specified time.

Did you Know that some kinds of baby geese follow the first object they see after hatching — whether it's a mother goose, moving tin can or human being? Within close to 13 hours, these goslings become completely attached to that moving object.

After this time, they shy away from all objects that are different from the one they first followed. This very specific kind of behavior is called **Imprinting**. A man named Konrad Lorenz has studied this phenomenon for years.

Human beings and most other animals do not imprint in such a rigid way.

Did you Know that all animals have critical periods for **bonding**? The bonding between a lamb and its mother is one example. Once the lamb is born, its mother licks it for nearly two hours before she allows it to nurse. If this licking ritual doesn't take place, the lamb fails to become attached to the mother. It can't recognize her, nor can the mother recognize her baby. Chances are, the lamb will die from starvation.

WITHOUT THAT BOND

There are some children who are given everything—everything but the most important thing of all, love. They are given plenty of food. Their diapers are changed. Their cribs are clean. They even have toys. They have, however, no person who comes when they cry. No special person picks them up and talks to them. No special person understands their cries, their gestures, their likes and dislikes. Many people care for them. These faces come and go. There is no one person with whom they share that essential bond or attachment.

What happens? These children stop calling for attention. Their smiles fade. They stop cooing and gurgling. They don't reach out to other people. They may fail to gain weight. Strangers are not upsetting, for everyone is a stranger. They'll go to anyone! Or, these children may turn inward and fail to build the language, social, emotional, and physical skills they need to develop.

Who are these children? Such children are often found in orphanages or other institutions where a number of people care for each child. They might also be children whose parents never have time for them and entrust them to a changing series of caregivers. These children may establish a bond with the first or second caregiver, but the rapid turnover of people makes them lose interest in trying.

The story of emotionally deprived babies is not new. There is an old account of a bonding experiment that Frederick II, a Holy Roman Emperor, commanded during the 13th century. Salimbene describes the experiment and its outcome:

> . . . He wanted to find out what kind of speech and what manner of speech children would have when they grew up if they spoke to no one beforehand. So he bade foster mothers and nurses to suckle the children, to bathe and wash them, but in no way to prattle with them, or to speak to them, for he wanted to learn whether they would speak the Hebrew language, which was the oldest, or Greek or Latin, or Arabic, or perhaps the language of their parents, of whom they had been born. But he laboured in vain because the children all died. For they could not live without the petting and joyful faces and loving words of their foster mothers.
>
> —quoted from *A Portable Medical Reader*.
> J.B. Ross and M.M. McLaughlin (eds.).
> New York: Viking Press, 1949

BEYOND THE BOND

At first the baby can't imagine a pleasant world outside his mother's arms. The baby associates this togetherness with feeling warm, satisfied and secure—whole.

Gradually, though, the baby learns that he is a separate person from his mother. He can feel happy, secure and alert even when he is playing with toys and other people.

Many things help the baby learn he is a separate person. For one thing, his parents leave him. He also learns that he has the power to do things on his own. A yell brings a parent on the run. A swipe at the mobile makes it move. A shake of a rattle makes a noise. He tries charming other people and finds that he is an instant hit. Brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, proud grandparents and neighbors shower him with attention and exciting kinds of entertainment.

The baby begins to reach out to other people because he has learned that he has the power to make others love him.

SEPARATIONS: letting go

Although a strong attachment to parents helps children to let go when the time comes, the first separations are never easy. During the first three years most children can't bear to let their parents leave them. When parents leave, the baby may cry as if she's been abandoned forever. The toddler clings to his mother when she reaches for her coat. These children may not know that their parents still exist when they are out of sight.

Little by little, though, children work through these fears. For instance, babies play peek-a-boo to make parents disappear and appear again. Older babies crawl out of sight and scuttle back to the spot where they left their parents. Toddlers may even play in a room adjoining the one where their parents are, but they too need to check back for a reassuring kiss or hug. Preschoolers begin to watch the big hand of the clock for the magic hour when their parents return. They begin to realize that their parents will return as promised.

A PAINFUL PARTING

Many mothers and fathers find it hard to separate, too. Watching their 3-year-old burst into tears when they leave him with a babysitter can give parents a lump in the throat and tears in the eyes as well. Sometimes parents feel guilty about leaving. They hate to cause such suffering. They wonder if they should give up a social life outside the home until the child can handle separations with ease.

Parents, however, have to leave their children. Parents who care for the children all day long need time away to relax and see their friends. Many parents, too, must work outside the home. They are separated from their children daily.

EASING THE PAIN

Parents can ease their children's fears, and make the road to independence smoother for themselves as well as their children, when they:

PREPARE CHILDREN FOR SEPARATIONS

Parents can talk to children beforehand about where they are going and why: *"Mommy is going to work and Mrs. Moran is going to take care of you every day."* Children need to know when they can expect parents to return: *". . . when you wake up,"* or *". . . when Daddy comes home."* This makes separation less of a shock. It lessens children's feelings that they have been abandoned. Parents should never sneak away from a child.

PROVIDE A CONSISTENT ROUTINE THAT CHILDREN CAN COUNT ON

If parents leave for work each day, it's easier for young children to let go of them if they leave at roughly the same time every day. Parents might arrange for a special activity just before they leave. They could read a story or play a record, for instance. Children also feel better if they know that parents will return at a certain time — after a nap, for example, or when the clock says 3:00.

Most grown-ups feel more secure when they know what is going to happen next. Children need a routine even more. Knowing that the separation will last a certain amount of time helps them relax and get involved in the activities at hand. Of course, the unexpected occurs. But in general, children should be able to count on their parents' comings and goings.

GET THEM USED TO NEW PEOPLE GRADUALLY

Whenever possible, parents should leave children with someone they know. They can invite the babysitter to come for a visit once or twice before the sitter stays alone with the child. Or they can spend a day or so at the day care center with the child before the child stays there alone.

Children feel more secure when they know and trust the grown-ups who are taking care of them. But trust takes time to grow. Children gain trust when they see that their parents like and trust their new caregiver. And it's easier to get to know someone new when children are in the security of their own home or when their parent is safely nearby.

Changes are hard on children. It's better if parents try to keep a few regular people caring for their child. This does not mean that children should be left with unsuitable people, however, even if they are friends.

LET CHILDREN TAKE SOMETHING FAMILIAR TO A NEW PLACE

Children need to take along something of their own to a new place. A blanket or toy that reminds them of their parents and their home may help them feel safer in strange places. Or, parents can let them keep something important that belongs to them — a pair of gloves or a purse, for example.

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO ACT OUT THEIR FEARS

Acting out the separation helps children feel in control. Playing "peek-a-boo" or "hide-and-seek" helps them see that parents reappear after they disappear. Pretending to be a parent who packs a suitcase and goes on a trip helps the child to understand that people do return. Parents should help their children understand that "good-bye" doesn't mean "forever."

Separations need not be a nightmare for parent and child; separations can even add to the bond between them. If they have built a strong and secure relationship, parent and child can become totally involved in new and challenging experiences and have more to share when they come together again.

FILM REVIEW SECTION

Love Me and Leave Me

Eighteen-month-old April Hornbrenner is adjusting to day care. Sheila, her mother, tries to make this adjustment easier by bringing April's favorite things to the center and spending time there with April and her teacher, Maeve Caruso.

Despite all these efforts, April cries every time Sheila leaves. To add to Sheila's worries, she and Bob, her former husband, have to make a big decision—whether April should spend the weekend with Bob. Bob wants very much to have his time with April and help her get to know his family. Sheila understands his feelings but thinks it's the wrong time for April to go. They turn to Maeve for advice.

WHY DO SHEILA AND BOB DECIDE THAT APRIL SHOULD STAY HOME WITH HER MOTHER FOR THE WEEKEND?

ACTIVITY PAGES

activity #1
STARTING ANEW

How did you feel when you entered this school for the first time?

What were some of the things you and others did to make you feel more comfortable and secure?

How would the feelings of a child entering kindergarten be different from or similar to your feelings as you entered school? Do the child's needs differ very much from your own?

If you were a kindergarten teacher, what plans would you make to help the kindergarten child?

What plans would you make to help a student your age adjust?

activity #2
CONCERNING A CAREGIVER

You are looking for a person to care for your baby while you work. You interview several people for the job. List 5 or 6 questions to ask during the interview to find out if the person understands the baby's need to form a bond with the caregiver.

activity #3
BONDING BLANKS

Complete the sentences in the left hand column by filling in the blank spaces with the appropriate word from the right hand column.

Parents have to learn to _____ their babies' cries, expressions and actions.	attachment
Young children feel more secure in strange places when they have _____ objects or people present.	feeding
Young children often have great difficulty _____ from their parents the first few times.	interpret
Being able to take care of oneself is called _____.	security
A strong bond with the parent gives the child the _____ to become independent and form relationships with others.	cry
The tendency of baby geese to follow the first moving object they see after hatching is called _____.	critical period
Parents should _____ their children for separations.	imprinting
When parents respond to babies' smiles and gestures as well as their cries, babies learn that there are many ways to get _____.	familiar
The warm and intimate caring and trust between parent and baby is called _____.	attention
A child becomes attached to a parent through everyday _____, dressing and playing.	separating
There is a _____ during which all animals, including human children, must form an attachment to their mother or another primary caregiver.	independence
Babies _____ less often and for shorter amounts of time in later months if their parents respond quickly and consistently to their cries during the first months.	prepare

GRAB BAG

to do

1. Observe baby and mother zoo animals, wild animals or household pets for at least 10 minutes. Watching one baby and mother interact, take notes on:

   different ways the baby gets the mother's attention
   how the mother responds to the baby's attention-getting behaviors
   different ways the mother cares for the baby.

2. Children and their parents react to separations in different ways. Observe 3 toddlers or preschool children as they say goodbye to their parents in a day care center, nursery school, Head Start center or family day care home. Record:

   the length of time each child has attended the center.
   the expression on each child's face as he or she enters the center
   familiar or favorite objects the child brings from home
   how long the parent stays
   what the parent does and says when leaving to help the child say goodbye
   the child's expression and actions when the parent leaves the room
   if the child cries, how long it takes him to stop
   what the teacher does to help the child accept the parent's departure.

3. Set up an interview with a few nurses or doctors. Ask them if they think that different methods of childbirth affect the bonding between parent and baby. For example, what are the advantages of prepared childbirth in which no drugs are used? Ask them about post-delivery procedures. Are parents separated from the baby right away? How often are the baby and parents together during the rest of the stay? How does a bond grow between parents and a newborn baby placed in an incubator or given other special care?

4. Interview teachers of young children at a day care center, Head Start center, nursery school or family day care home. Ask them how teachers can support the attachment between parent and child when the child is at the center.

to discuss

1. Try to remember how it felt to be a young child. Can you remember different occasions when your parents had to leave you? Can you remember how you felt? If you have brothers or sisters, try to recall how they reacted when your parents left. If they reacted differently from each other, why do you think this happened?
2. Can a father develop a strong relationship with his baby if the baby is breast fed?

to research

1. Konrad Lorenz's study on imprinting with geese. (See his book called *King Solomon's Ring.)*
2. Attachment between baby and mother chimpanzees. (Jan van Lawick-Goodall has been studying chimpanzees for over ten years in Tanzania, Africa. *In the Shadow of Man* is her account of her experiences with the chimpanzees. *Learning to Love*, by Harry Harlow is another account of attachment among chimpanzees.)
3. Attachment between mothers and babies in different cultures.

   What are some ways mothers build a bond with their babies?
   When do mothers separate from the babies?
   When are the babies weaned?
   How do they react?

   (*Infancy in Uganda* by Mary Ainsworth and *Childhood in Contemporary Cultures* by Margaret Mead and Martha Wolfenstein are good references.)
4. The effects of institutional life on the baby's ability to become attached to other people. (See Sally Provence and Rose Lipton's *Children in Institutions.*)
5. Different patterns of attachment between babies and mothers, and babies and fathers. (Research is being done on this at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, under the direction of T. Berry Brazelton.)

BOOK BROWSING

Here are some books that will give you more information on...

...attachment between parents and babies

Infants and Mothers. T. Berry Brazelton. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1969. (paperback)

Maternal-Infant Bonding. Marshall Klaus and John Kennell. St. Louis, Missouri: C.V. Mosby Company, 1976.

The Roots of Love. Helene S. Arnstein. New York: Bantam Books, 1975. (paperback)

...separation

The Magic Years. Selma Fraiberg. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959. (paperback)

Oneness and Separateness: From Infant to Individual. Louise J. Kaplan. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978.

Who Cares for the Baby? Choices in Child Care. Beatrice Marden Glickman and Nesha Bass Springer. New York: Schocken Books, 1978.

...bonding between animals

In the Shadow of Man. Jane van Lawick-Goodall. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1971. (paperback)

King Solomon's Ring. Konrad Lorenz. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1952.

Learning to Love. Harry Harlow. San Francisco: Albion Publishing Company, 1973. (paperback)

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